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SECTION M – EVALUATION FACTORS FOR AWARD

M.1 General

This procurement is being conducted using formal source selection procedures, under FAR Part 15. The Government will award a contract resulting from this solicitation to an Offeror whose proposal represents the best overall value to the Government. The Government reserves the right to award a contract on the basis of the initial offers received, without discussion, in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 52.215-1(f), Contract Award. Therefore, initial offers should contain the Offeror's best offer. The Government, however, reserves the right to conduct discussions if later determined by the Contracting Officer to be necessary. The Government may also reduce the number of highly rated proposals within the competitive range for purposes of efficiency in accordance with FAR 15.306.

Each Offeror shall submit a complete and acceptable proposal in accordance with the instructions in Section L. Such a proposal: (1) is for the total requirement and scope stated in this Request for Proposal (RFP) and; (2) accepts each of the requirements, provisions, terms and conditions, and clauses stated in all sections of this RFP.

Proposals that require substantial revisions because of significant omissions of information requested in RFP Section L may not be considered among the highly rated proposals within the competitive range in accordance with FAR 15.306. Offerors' proposals that restate the requirements or statements from the RFP or just simply state that the Offeror's proposal is compliant with the RFP, without providing a description of the approaches, techniques or solutions, may not be considered or may receive a very low score for those items. Generally speaking, "generic" information scores lower than information "well-tailored" to the Government's environment. Creative solutions are strongly encouraged and will be rated higher as appropriate.

The Government intends to review each proposal in detail and in its entirety; however, a majority of requirements will be evaluated for compliance with those specified in this RFP. Major discriminators will assist in determining the best solution for the Government and will be evaluated using an adjectival rating system. Those discriminators and their factors for evaluation are identified herein.

M.1.1 Contractor Support

Offerors are hereby notified that the Government intends to use a private company/organization to provide assistance during this acquisition. The company/organization may have access to some of the information contained in the Offeror's proposals and will be subject to appropriate conflict of interests and standards of conduct. The company/organization is also required to comply with strict confidentiality restrictions.

M.2 Basis for Award

The primary goal of this procurement is to obtain managed services in a cost-effective manner; thus, price is an important factor in the selection decision. The Government contemplates award of a single fixed-price IDIQ contract resulting from this solicitation. The

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Government will make award to the responsible offeror whose offer conforms to the solicitation and is most advantageous to the Government, price and other factors considered. Among those proposals that are eligible for award, the selection decision will be based on the following factors:

A. Non-price factors:

1. Transition
2. Managed Services - Technical Requirements
3. Managed Services - Program-wide Operations and Management
4. Corporate Experience and Past Performance
5. Small Business Participation

Factor 1, Transition is considered more important than the other factors when considered individually. Factors 2 and 3, Managed Services - Technical Approach and Managed Services - Program Operations and Management, respectively, are considered equal in weight. Factors 4 and 5, Past Performance and Small Business Participation are considered equal in weight and are less important than all other factors. The Sub-factors within each Factor are considered to be of equal importance, except where noted.

B. Price

When combined, the non-price factors are approximately equal to cost or price.

The Government is averse to risk. The Government will consider risk in the evaluation of the Managed Services, Business and Pricing proposals.

It is important that the Offeror direct the proposal to the evaluation factors and cover each appropriately in response to the solicitation requirements and in accordance with the instructions in Section L. Accordingly, an award will be made to the responsible and technically acceptable Offeror whose proposal provides the greatest overall benefit to the Government.

Major discriminators described in each proposal will be evaluated qualitatively and categorized as *Outstanding, Better, Acceptable, Marginal or Unacceptable* in relation to the non-price evaluation factors for Factors 1, 2, and 3. A finding of *Unacceptable* of any one factor may result in the entire proposal being found to be unacceptable. Factor 4, *Corporate Experience and Past Performance*, will be evaluated qualitatively and categorized as *Neutral, Outstanding, Better, Satisfactory, or Marginal*.

M.3 Evaluation of Proposals

M.3.1 Proposal Preparation Compliance Determination

The Government will review proposals submitted to determine compliance with the proposal preparation instructions. If it is determined that the proposal is substantially not in compliance with the instructions in Section L, the Government may deem that proposal to be unacceptable and it will not be evaluated further. The proposal may be removed from

consideration for contract award.

M.3.2 Mandatory Requirements Compliance Evaluation

Compliance with the requirements of Section C is considered to be mandatory. The government will review Section J, Attachments L-1 and L-2 *Managed Service Compliance Matrices*, of the Offeror's proposal to make a preliminary determination of compliance with Section C. These mandatory requirements will be reviewed on a Pass/Fail basis. If the Government determines that a submitted proposal does not offer to satisfy all the requirements as documented in Section C, the Government may deem that proposal to be unacceptable and it will not be evaluated further. The proposal may be removed from consideration for contract award. If there is a conflict between the written proposal and the matrices, the written proposals will take precedence.

M.3.3 Non-Price Evaluation Factors

Proposals will be evaluated against the following factors to determine compliance with the minimum solicitation requirements and to document areas where the proposal exceeds the minimum requirements. The list of considerations is not all-inclusive and it is expected that other aspects might be considered, depending on the unique properties of an Offeror's proposal.

M.3.3.1 Factor 1 - Transition

The Offeror's transition and implementation approach, while considered part of the Program Management approach, is critical to the success of the TCE Program and therefore will be evaluated separately from other aspects of program management and will be weighted more heavily in regards to evaluation. The transition and implementation approach will be evaluated on the extent to which it demonstrates a comprehensive, sound, and reasonable approach to ensuring a seamless transition of all sites to the TCE network. The transition and implementation approach will be assessed to determine the extent to which:

1. The proposed transition and implementation approach is realistic and achievable, demonstrates successful experience in transitioning networks of similar size and complexity, minimizes disruption to business operations, mitigates risk, and meets each of the requirements of C.3.2.1.
2. The proposed plan is feasible and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirements, including a sound and reasonable solution to minimizing risk.
3. The proposed approach to assuming responsibility of Government equipment reduces burden to the Government for removal of equipment from the Government inventory.

(NOTE: The Transition subfactors are listed in descending order of importance).

M.3.3.2 Factor 2 – Managed Services - Technical Requirements

The Offeror's proposal will be evaluated to determine the extent to which it demonstrates a comprehensive, sound, and reasonable approach to providing fully managed Wide Area

Network services to the Government. The proposal will be assessed to determine the extent to which:

1. It demonstrates a thorough understanding of the TCE concept and the goals and objectives of the program.
2. The proposed network architecture demonstrates a sound and reasonable approach to meeting the fully managed WAN service requirements of the Government and meets each of the requirements of C.3.1.
3. The Offeror's solution ensures a high level of security and demonstrates compliance with each of the requirements of C.3.1.2, C.3.1.3, C.3.1.4, and C.3.1.5.
4. The Offeror's approach to COOP and DR is reasonable and effective, demonstrating redundancy, resiliency, and ability to provide uninterrupted service, as well as the demonstrated ability to recover from unavoidable service disruptions.
5. It demonstrates the Offeror's ability to provide three differentiated classes of service for various traffic types and meets each of the requirements of C.3.3.1.3.
6. The Offeror demonstrates the capability to provide each of the enhanced services described in C.4.

M.3.3.3 Factor 3 - Managed Services – Program-Wide Operations and Management

The Offeror's program-wide operations and management approach will be evaluated to determine the extent to which it demonstrates a comprehensive, sound, and reasonable approach to accomplish and manage the TCE program. The proposal will be assessed to determine the extent to which:

1. The Offeror's business model includes formalized arrangements with teaming partners/subcontractors, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
2. The Offeror's Program Management Plan demonstrates a comprehensive and reasonable approach to providing proactive and responsive program management support to the Department and the TCE Contract and meets the requirements of C.3.2 (excluding C.3.2.1).
3. The Offeror's Quality Control Plan demonstrates a sound and reasonable approach to ensuring the level of services provided meet or exceed the SLAs identified in Section F.
4. The Offeror can provide a web-based ordering system meeting each of the requirements of C.3.2.3.
5. The Offeror can provide a web-based billing and invoicing function meeting each of the requirements of C.3.2.4.
6. The Offeror can provide management reporting capabilities meeting each of the requirements of C.3.2.5.
7. The Offeror provides help desk support meeting each of the requirements of C.3.2.6.
8. The Offeror provides a TCE Web Site meeting each of the requirements of C.3.2.7.
9. The Offeror provides enterprise-wide directory services meeting each of the requirements of C.3.2.8.
10. The Offeror provides data-feeds to the Security Operations Center meeting each of the requirements of C.3.2.9.

M.3.3.4 Factor 4 – Corporate Experience and Past Performance

The Government will evaluate the extent to which the Offeror's has demonstrated successful past and present performance in providing services of similar scope. The Government will verify Offeror representations.

The Government may contact some or all references provided by the Offeror to ask to what degree, among other things:

- The Offeror met transition and implementation plans/schedules;
- The Offeror delivered quality products and services in a timely manner;
- The Offeror's products/performance conformed to the terms and conditions of its contract;
- The Offeror was reasonable and cooperative during performance; and
- The Offeror was committed to customer satisfaction.

The following will be used to evaluate this factor:

1. Compliance with the SOW and specifications; conformance to standards of good workmanship; responsiveness to technical direction, and experience offering differentiated classes of service to an enterprise customer on a single network and with multiple enterprise locations.
2. Adherence to contract transition and delivery schedule.
3. Adherence to task order estimates; reasonableness of change order proposals; and completeness of billing.
4. Working relationship with Contracting Officer, COTR, and other points of contact.
5. Relationship with client and level of satisfaction for products or service acquired.
6. Track record and performance of Key Personnel in managing key aspects of contract work.
7. Past performance of subcontractors and teaming partners.

M.3.3.5 Factor 5 - Small Business Participation/Subcontracting Plan

The offeror's subcontracting plan submitted in response to this RFP will be evaluated for aggressive goals for small, HUBZone small, small disadvantaged, women-owned small, and veteran-owned small business concerns. Aggressive is defined as meeting or exceeding the IRS goals as detailed in the IRS Subcontracting Plan Outline. The evaluation will include a review of the offeror's FY2003 SF294 and SF295 subcontract reports.

SDB offerors that submit proposals as prime contractors, demonstrate that they are a responsible and responsive offeror performing 51% or more of the work, and waive the SDB price evaluation adjustment in the clause at 52.219-23, Notice of Price Evaluation Adjustment for Small Disadvantaged Business Concerns, will receive additional consideration for targets for subcontracting to SDB concerns in the authorized NAICS industry. Determinations made under this paragraph are unilateral decisions made solely at the discretion of the Government during conduct of evaluations.

Large business offerors that submit proposals as prime contractors and provide targets for Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB) Participation, by the contractor, including joint venture

partners, and team members, and a total target for SDB participation by subcontractors, will receive additional consideration for targets for subcontracting to SDB concerns in the authorized NAICS industry. In order to receive additional consideration, large business offerors must submit the form displayed in Section L, 10.3 Tab F, or an alternate form which contains all of the information requested. Determinations made under this paragraph are unilateral decisions made solely at the discretion of the Government during conduct of evaluations.

M.3.4 Scoring Adjectives

The following adjectives will be used as a general guidance in assessing each sub factor as a whole:

- Outstanding (O) Very significantly exceeds most or all solicitation requirements while presenting very low risks. Response exceeds a "Better" rating. The Offeror has clearly demonstrated an understanding of all aspects of the requirements to the extent that timely and highest performance is anticipated.
- Better (B) Fully meets all solicitation requirements and significantly exceeds many of the solicitation requirements while presenting low risks. Response exceeds an "Acceptable" rating. The areas in which the Offeror exceeds the requirements are anticipated to result in a high level of quality, efficiency, or productivity.
- Acceptable (A) Meets all solicitation requirements while presenting only moderate risk. Complete, comprehensive, and exemplifies the Offeror's ability to provide compliant understanding of the scope and depth of the requirements.
- Marginal (M) Less than "Acceptable". There are some deficiencies in the proposal. However, given the opportunity for discussions, the proposal has a reasonable chance of becoming "Acceptable".
- Unacceptable (U) Proposal has many deficiencies and/or many omissions and/or presents unacceptable risks. The Offeror has failed to understand the requirements to provide a compliant logical approach to the Government's requirements. However, given the opportunity for discussions, the proposal could have a chance of becoming "Acceptable".

The following adjectives will be used as guidelines in evaluating ***Past Performance***:

- Neutral No relevant past performance available for evaluation. Offeror has asserted that it has no relevant or similar past performance experience. Proposal receives no merit or demerit for this factor.
- Outstanding No risk anticipated with delivery of quality product/service, timeliness, or of any degradation of performance or lack of customer satisfaction

(or cost growth, if applicable) based upon Offeror's past performance.

- **Better** Very little risk anticipated with delivery of quality product/service, on time, or of degradation of performance or lack of customer satisfaction (or cost growth, if applicable) based upon the Offeror's past performance.
- **Satisfactory** Some potential risk anticipated with delivery of quality product/service, on time, and of degradation or lack of customer satisfaction (or cost growth, if applicable) based upon the Offeror's past performance.
- **Marginal** Significant potential risk anticipated with delivery of quality product/service, on time, and of degradation of performance based upon the Offeror's past performance. (A rating of marginal does not by itself make the proposal ineligible for award.)

M.3.5 Price Evaluation

For purposes of an award decision, an evaluated price will be derived from the Model Delivery Order(s). The proposed prices for all items, including those in the Model Delivery Order(s) and other proposed items, will also be evaluated for price reasonableness through comparison with other proposed prices, other contract vehicles, as well as through other price analysis techniques. The Model Delivery Order(s) will also be evaluated for consistency with the Managed Services proposal. Discounts for early payment, if offered, will not be considered in evaluation for award.

The Price Proposal will be evaluated, but will not be assigned a numerical score or weight. The Price Proposal will be evaluated for accuracy, completeness, and reasonableness. The Government will review all proposals to determine if prices are realistic for the work to be performed, reflect a clear understanding of the requirements, and are consistent with Offeror's Managed Services proposal. The Government is interested in fair and reasonable pricing that will allow and facilitate an Offeror's ability to successfully perform under the resulting contract. The Offeror selected for award will be determined to be the best overall value to the Government, i.e., the best price for the technical solution offered.

Proposed mechanisms for future price adjustments will be assessed to determine the reasonableness and the perceived benefit to the Government. Such considerations may be included in determining the best overall value to the Government.

To be considered for award, the Offeror must submit fixed prices that comply with the requirements of Sections B, C, J, and L. An offer that is materially unbalanced as to prices for the base period, option periods, and various CLINs may be rejected as being unacceptable.

M.3.5.1 Price Evaluation of Options

The Government will evaluate offers for award purposes by evaluating prices for the basic requirement as well as all options. Evaluation of options will not obligate the Government to exercise the options. Offers containing any charges for failure to exercise any option will be rejected.

(End of Section)